

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed July 15, 2003. Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-10 and 12-20 stand rejected and Claim 11 stand objected to. Applicants submit that the pending claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited references. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Section 112 Rejection

The Office Action rejects Claims 1 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 16 to correct the typographical errors resulting in the informalities. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims do not narrow the scope of the claims. Favorable action is requested.

Section 102 Rejection

The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ester, et al. (PCT Pub. WO 98/47255) ("*Ester*"). The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Thompson (U.S. Patent 6,249,510 B1) ("*Thompson*"). Independent Claims 1, 16, and 19 have been amended to recite, "causing one of the component signals from the optical input terminal to be routed to said further terminal, and causing a component signal present at said further terminal to be included in the optical output terminal." The Office Action cites no teaching of these elements in *Ester* and *Thompson*. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 102(e) rejections of Independent Claims 1, 16, and 19 and their respective dependents be withdrawn.

Section 103 Rejection

The Office Action rejects Claims 2, 5, 7, 9-10, 17-18 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Thompson* in view of Meli (U.S. Patent 5,956,319). The Office Action rejects Claims 8 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Ester* in view of Cao (U.S. Patent 6,337,755 B1) and in view of Arecco (U.S. Patent 6,400,476 B1). The Office Action rejects Claims 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Ester in view of *Arecco, et al.* (U.S. Patent 5,903,371) ("the '371 Patent"). Applicants traverse these rejections and all findings and assertions therein. In particular, these claims depend from independent Claims 1, 16, and 19. As discussed above, independent Claims 1, 16, and 19 are allowable over the *Ester* and *Thompson*. The Office Action cites no teaching of the missing elements in *Meli*, *Cao*, *Arecco*, and *Arecco, et al.* Thus, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 11 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 11 has been so rewritten.

New Claims

Claims 21-22 are added to more fully claim the invention. These claims are allowable for reasons analogous to those discussed above.

CONCLUSION

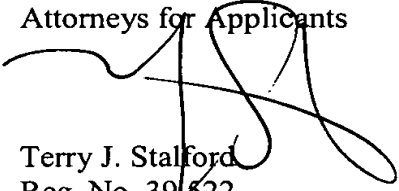
Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all the pending claims.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

An additional filing fee of \$208.00 is due. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge this additional fee of \$208.00 and any other fees, or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: October 15, 2003